

Greencastle Common Council Special Meeting
June 17, 2008

Call to order: 6:00pm

Roll Call: Janie Lanie, Mark Hammer, Jinsie Bingham, Adam Cohen, Terry Smith; a quorum was confirmed.

Present: Mayor Sue Murray, City Planner Shannon Norman, City Attorney Laurie Robertson Hardwick

A special meeting was held to conduct interviews for candidates for the Greencastle School Board; the Greencastle Common Council appoints one (1) member to the School Board for a 4-year term.

Mayor Sue Murray opened the meeting by announcing that the Council interviewed Bruce Stinebrickner at the regular session on June 10, 2008. Mayor Murray announced that Charlene Shrewsbury withdrew her application on June 17, 2008.

There were two (2) applicants for the position; the first candidate was Tim Trigg. Councilor Mark Hammer noted that Trigg had served on the Park Board and Planning Commission and asked how working with those boards had prepared Trigg for the School Board. Trigg indicated that he had experience in dealing with people and budget and managing change.

Council President asked what Trigg believed he could bring to the appointment; Trigg discussed having four (4) children going through the Greencastle system as well as offering diversity.

Councilor Jinsie Bingham questioned whether Trigg's business experience would be an asset; Trigg indicated that he has a financial background and experience dealing with public and private entities.

Councilor Adam Cohen discussed diversity in the school district and asked Trigg how he believes diversity affects the schools; Trigg noted that he could offer open-mindedness and insight in the position.

Councilor Terry Smith questioned Trigg on he feels about police presence and involvement in the schools; Trigg noted that the involvement is positive. Smith also discussed issues with drugs in the schools; Trigg discussed the idea of random drug testing outside of those in athletics.

Adam Cohen discussed programs for students who were not college bound; Trigg talked about increasing or enhancing vocational opportunities. Trigg also talked about offering more arts education and expanded physical education options.

John Lanie talked about the relationship between sports and education. Trigg noted that students learn a lot from playing sports—namely diversity and the ability to develop long-term relationships.

Mark Hammer discussed Trigg's commitments to Park Board and Plan Commission and the possibility of becoming "burnt out"; Trigg indicated that he would retain the positions and that he saw no conflict.

There was additional discussion on appointed versus elected school boards.

Adam Cohen questioned what made Trigg decide to apply; Trigg indicated that he had many discussions with others and decided that the time to get involved was right. Trigg noted that involvement in the School Board will be more intensive than with the township appointment, which he sought earlier.

Jinsie Bingham brought up the idea of consolidation; Trigg noted that he didn't think it was necessary but could support an action if it met the needs of Greencastle Schools. There was discussion on a mandatory retirement age for teachers; Trigg noted that with today's economy it is necessary for people to work longer.

Laurie Robertson Hardwick asked Trigg to discuss some of the accomplishments of Plan Commission and Park in which he has been involved; Trigg noted the improvements at Big Walnut Sports Park, Clearwater's Park Addition, and People Pathways as important achievements.

Trigg thanked the Council for their time; the Tim Trigg interview ended at 6:18pm.

The Greencastle Common Council resumed interviews at 6:20pm with an interview of Phil Gick. Gick provided the Council with a cover letter and resume prior to the meeting. Gick discussed his Army service and education as well as his membership and leadership role with the Greencastle Heritage Preservation Society. He noted that while he travels for work, he hasn't missed a regular meeting of the Heritage Preservation Society since accepting his position. He stated that his motivation in applying is to give back to the community through his principle and training from the military and industry. Gick noted that he believes in engagement between individuals inside and outside of the classroom as well as discipline and structure.

Council President John Lanie asked what Gick sees as his strongest attribute; Gick stated that he can offer an enlarged perspective having lived outside of the community. There was discussion on the experiences of the Gick Family in other school districts as their children attended several schools while the Gick was in the military. Gick noted that Greencastle can have a higher level of credentials because of DePauw.

Councilor Adam Cohen asked how Gick would handle issues of diversity; Gick noted that his military background was good training in diversity and that the schools have cannot "tolerate intolerance". Gick also discussed the newly formed committee on drug

issues in the schools. Gick also stated that he had limited knowledge of the current school board but hopes that his experience could fill a need on the Board.

Councilor Jinsie Bingham questioned whether Gick himself had a positive experience while in the Greencastle School system; Gick noted that he had a positive experience and was well prepared for college and military service. Gick noted the importance of parents being engaged and civic-minded.

Councilor Mark Hammer questioned whether it was an issue that Gick didn't have children in Greencastle schools; Gick indicated that he didn't see it as a problem—he has the experience from schools where his children attended and also his grandchildren to reflect on for perspective. Gick also noted that he does live across from Greencastle High School and relayed multiple anecdotes in regards to students and staff.

John Lanie questioned whether Gick could be strong in his stance on issues of importance and speak his mind; Gick noted that he does have strong convictions and that he understands having to explain things to the public.

Jinsie Bingham asked Gick what influenced him to apply for the position; Gick noted that at first he was unsure if should dive-into community work, but his work with the Heritage Preservation Society and his desire to work for the community pushed him forward. Gick noted that because of his work travel he does have some time constraints, but he believes he can make time for the meetings.

The members of the public were given time to ask questions. Leslie Hanson stated that she believed that Gick's time constraints could be an issue because of there is more to service on the Board than just monthly meetings; Gick noted that he believed that he could make time for other meetings.

The Council took time to deliberate. Adam Cohen questioned the protocol for appointing an individual; John Lanie noted that Councilors could make recommendations or motions to appoint. Mark Hammer and Adam Cohen discussed calls and inquiries they had received in regards to the appointment. Mark Hammer stated he believed that three (3) great candidate had applied. Adam Cohen stated that the School Board must consider many issues—athletics, diversity, academics—which need to be discussed in a public forum. Jinsie Bingham noted that she was surprised at the lack of public participation in the selection process. Mark Hammer stated that he didn't believe that not having children in the district should be a disqualifying factor.

Terry Smith discussed Phil Gick's extensive travel and exposure to diversity in the military as positive attributes.

Adam Cohen noted differences between the candidates: Bruce Stinebrickner's background in academics, Tim Trigg's community awareness, and Phil Gick's worldly exposure and diversity training. Cohen discussed that he believed that each of the candidates were capable of speaking their mind on the Board.

Terry Smith noted that Phil Gick came across as a leader. There was additional discussion on leadership; Mayor Sue Murray indicated that because it is a small school board, one person has the potential to make a large impact.

A motion to appoint Phil Gick to the Greencastle School Board was made by Terry Smith and seconded by John Lanie. There was discussion on the motion; Adam Cohen noted the disparity between Gick's experience and his knowledge of the Greencastle Schools. Mark Hammer noted all three (3) applicants are qualified and that it was difficult to weigh the options. A roll call vote was taken on the motion; Terry Smith voted to appoint Phil Gick. Mark Hammer, Jinsie Bingham, John Lanie, and Adam Cohen voted nay. The motion is denied (4-1).

A motion to appoint Bruce Stinebrickner was made by Mark Hammer and seconded by Jinsie Bingham. John Lanie noted that he was impressed with Stinebrickner's interview and Adam Cohen noted his commitment to Putnam County, DePauw and Greencastle. A roll call vote was taken on the motion; Mark Hammer, Jinsie Bingham, John Lanie, and Adam Cohen voted to appoint Bruce Stinebrickner. Terry Smith voted nay. The motion carried (4-1).

Bruce Stinebrickner is appointed to the Greencastle School Board and will be notified after the meeting by Council President John Lanie.

Mark Hammer discussed the process for the Council making appointments. Hammer discussed an email from Monica Fennel in regards to perceived miscommunication in regards to the application process. There was additional discussion; it was noted that Fennel could not be present for the interviews and was offered a chance to interview by phone and declined. Hammer noted that if the process is flawed, changes should be made so that there is no perception of unfairness.

Mayor Sue Murray stated that it is a unique situation and that no one can reconstruct what happened, however flaws in communication should be avoided in the future.

Adam Cohen stated that withdraws of applications should go to the President of the City Council. It was noted that a new policy would need to be derived and Jinsie Bingham suggested an application form. Mayor Sue Murray stated that the Council members should formulate a process that they believe to be fair and that it can be reviewed for compliance with statute.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24pm on a motion by Adam Cohen, seconded by John Lanie.